

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 HERMOS 00299 211928Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HERMOSILLO 0299

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : PINS, EAGR, MX

SUBJECT : PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA COMMENTS ON BIEBRICH CASE.
LAND TENURE PROBLEM.

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING HIS FINAL SCHEDULED VISIT TO SONORA AS PRESIDENT, ECHEVERRIA HEARD FIRST ANNUAL INFORME OF GOVERNOR CARRILLO MARCOR, 20 OCTOBER, SPEAKING EXTEMPORANEOUSLY FOR SIXTY MINUTES, THE PRESIDENT COMMENTED ON BIEBRICH, WHOM HE REPLACED AS GOVERNOR BY CARRILLO MARCOR A YEAR AGO FOLLOWING THE 21 OCTOBER "MASSACRE" OF CAMPESINOS AT SAN IGNACIO, RIO MUERTO, IN SOUTHERN SONORA. ECHEVERRIA ALSO DISCUSSED AT LENGTH LAND TENURE PROBLEM, NOT INDICATING ANY SPECIFIC POSSIBILITY FOR SOLUTION BUT VOICING HOPE THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED IN REMAINING 42 DAYS OF HIS MANDATE. HE ALSO DWELT ON SITUATION AT UNIVERSITY, WHOSE RECTOR AND GOVERNING COUNCIL HE WILL MEET SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR MEXICO CITY LATE AFTERNOON OF 20 OCTOBER, AND MENTIONED HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENT TO PROVIDE ALL THE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED BY SOUTHERN SONORA VICTIMS OF HURRICANE "LIZA". END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S ARRIVAL IN SONORA WAS GREETED BY OPEN LETTER SIGNED BY 12,000 SONORANS ASKING HIM TO INTERVENE IN "BIEBRICH CASE" AND REQUESTING THAT HE END THE "JUDICIAL PERSECUTION" OF THE FORMER GOVERNOR. FOLLOWING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HERMOS 00299 211928Z

A DETAILED REVIEW OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH BIEBRICH, WHICH

BROKE NO NEW GROUND, ECHEVERRIA STATED HE HAD "ACCEPTED HIS RESIGNATION" WHEN BIEBRICH FORGOT CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF NEGOTIATION AND DIALOGUE IN SETTLEMENT OF CAMPESINO PROBLEMS, AND ALLOWED A LAND INVASION TO BE "RESOLVED" BY USE OF POLICE RESTRAINT. ECHEVERRIA SAID CASE AGAINST BIEBRICH WAS SUB-JUDICE AND THUS BEYOND HIS CONTROL. HOWEVER HE SAID HE WOULD ASK "SECRETARIO DE GOBERNACION" (MOYA PALENCIA, ALSO A FORMER PATRON OF BIEBRICH) TO CARRY OUT AN EXHAUSTIVE INVESTIGATION AND SUBMIT A REPORT WHICH HE--THE PRESIDENT--WOULD THEN DISCUSS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF BIEBRICH'S SONORAN SUPPORTERS.

2. SONORA LAND TENURE QUESTION, WHICH HAS FESTERED IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER FOR OVER 60 YEARS, WAS RUMORED SETTLED, WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE MADE DURING THIS VISIT. IT WAS NOT THE CASE, ALTHOUGH ECHEVERRIA REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED HOPE THIS WAS A PROBLEM HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO PASS TO HIS SUCCESSOR, BUT COULD SOLVE IN REMAINING 42 DAYS OF HIS TERM OF OFFICE. RENEWING THE MODERATE STANCE HE TOOK AT HIS 19 APR 1976 CIUDAD OBREGON MASS MEETING WITH CAMPESINOS (HE REFERRED TO THE MEETING WITH CAMPESINOS AS TAKING PLACE 2 OR 3 MONTHS AGO, NOT 6 AS WAS IN FACT THE CASE,) HE CALLED ON BOTH LANDOWNERS AND CLAIMANTS TO NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH, AND TO BE REASONABLE. HE WARNED AGAINST ISOLATED COMMUNIST-INSPIRED AGITATORS AT ONE EXTREME, AND "FASCIST" ELEMENTS OF THE CIUDAD OBREGON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AT THE OTHER. LATTER WAS HIS ONLY REFERENCE TO UNPATRIOTIC AND UNMEXICAN FORCES OF REACTION HE SO REGULARLY CASTIGATES AT MONTERREY.

3. PROBLEMS WHICH HAD CLOSED UNIVERSITY OF SONORA FOR HALF A YEAR IN 1976 WERE TOUCHED UPON BY PRESIDENT IN HIS REVIEW OF HIS ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO EXPAND NATION'S UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE SO THAT MEXICANS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY COULD BE EDUCATED IN THEIR HOME STATES AND REMAIN THERE TO SERVE THEIR OWN PEOPLE, RATHER THAN HAVE TO "EXPATRIATE" THEMSELVES TO THE DF (DISTRITO FEDERAL) OR EVEN WORSE TO THE UNITED STATES. HE WARNED AGAINST ALLOWING CORRUPTION OF THE MEXICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM BY IDEOLOGUES WITH IMPORTED POLITICAL IDEAS.

4. TOUCHING ON STORM DAMAGE IN SOUTHERN SONORA BY HURRICANE "LIZA", ECHEVERRIA SAID THE NATION AS A WHOLE WOULD RALLY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HERMOS 00299 211928Z

AROUND THEIR SONORAN BRETHREN IN THEIR HOUR OF NEED.
COMMENT: THESE FINAL REMARKS RE STORM DAMAGE TEND TO CONFIRM BELIEF OF THE UNDERSIGNED THAT ECHEVERRIA GAVE ORDERS THAT SONORA NOT ACCEPT PROFFERED OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE FROM ITS AMERICAN FRIENDS IN SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES. AFTER GOVERNOR HAD TENTATIVELY ACCEPTED UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE A FEW DAYS AFTER THE STORM, AS TESTIMONIALS OF SOLIDARITY, THE COORDINATOR OF RELIEF EFFORTS IN SONORA FLATLY STATED TO THE UNDERSIGNED

AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNOR OF ARIZONA THAT OFFER
WAS APPRECIATED BUT NO ASSISTANCE WAS REQUIRED, AS ALL NEEDS
OF STORM VICTIMS WERE FULLY MET BY MEXICAN SOURCES. PRESIDENT
NOW CONFIRMS REPORTS REACHING US FROM OTHER SOURCES, THAT THIS
WAS NOT THE CASE.
SACKSTEDER

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